

Your City, Your Way

Town Hall Meeting Summary

A Message from the City Manager

I want to personally thank all of the community participants who attended the 2011 town hall meetings. We truly enjoyed spending our time with you and learning about what you feel is important to you, your family and your community. We know the past few years have been difficult and there are several key areas in our Southern Nevada region that you feel could be improved; so do we. We want to continue working with you, talking with you and taking active steps right beside you to ensure that we provide the world-class city that you, your children and your grandchildren deserve. We have a lot of work to do, and we know we can't do it alone.

We will focus our efforts on strategies that address the challenges most common to the members of our community and work on providing opportunities for our community to become engaged. Additionally, we will strive to build collaborative partnerships with the public, private and non-profit sectors to ensure the needs of our community residents are met. We have a long road ahead, but your elected officials, my executive staff and the city employees are committed to this community.

Our vision for the city of Las Vegas is: A world-class, vibrant, affordable, economically and ethnically diverse, progressive city where citizens feel safe, enjoy their neighborhoods and easily access their city government. We want to feel confident that every Las Vegas resident has the opportunity to be involved in our community and to help us achieve our vision.

The information in the remainder of this report is a brief synopsis of the data we collected from the discussion groups. A more complete summary is attached as is the PowerPoint presentation from the town hall meeting.

Executive Summary

As a follow-up to the initial series of town hall meetings a year ago, which were designed to solicit feedback about the city's current economic condition, the most recent Your City, Your Way town halls provided a forum for dialogue between the city and our community. We began planning for the town hall meetings with three goals in mind:

- 1) Educate our citizens about the city's finances, redevelopment efforts and the results of a community survey and city report card; and
- 2) Provide a forum for dialogue between city representatives and members of our community about those issues which collectively we feel are most critical to our constituents; and
- 3) Identify strategies, from the perspective of our citizens, about the city's responsibility and the community's responsibility in addressing those issues considered most critical.

Based on the Cobalt Community Assessment, a survey which was completed in August 2010, we determined that our community dialogue should focus on two areas:

- College / Career Preparation
- Economic Health of the Community

We held six town hall meetings, which were supported by the city manager and several key staff members from various city departments. Following a presentation by the city manager, Mayor Goodman and the respective City Council member from each ward, city staff members facilitated and "scribed" a group discussion about the topics identified above.

There were approximately 120 individuals who attended the town hall meetings, which is considerably less than the several hundred who appeared in last year's meetings. Despite our outreach efforts, which included stories in the local news media, messages on Channel 2, Internet postings, announcements at City Council meetings and news conferences, e-mail blasts, City Council member e-mail and newsletter blasts and individual letters to school principals; we found there was less interest this time around. Perhaps that's because the city's budget is more stable this year compared to last.

We were very grateful for those who participated in the group discussions and found their opinions, expertise and recommendations insightful and helpful as we continue to make efforts to improve our community.

There were many great ideas that were presented at the town hall meetings and even though they all deserve additional attention, there were some ideas that were consistent in all of the town hall meetings, which we felt, deserved additional focus:

Common Suggestions

Economic Health

- There is a need to expand business beyond hospitality and gaming
- Focus on finding businesses that pay higher salaries and require higher levels of education
- Marketing the value of Las Vegas is a critical component
- Partnering with agencies such as the Clark County School District is vital
- The city could explore providing incentives to companies to do business in Las Vegas

College and Career Preparation

- There are multiple opportunities for the city to partner with the school district, including sharing facilities, paying more attention to afterschool programs and providing support to those interested in college (application and scholarship process support)
- Individuals who are currently out of work could benefit from interviewing and resume writing workshops, which could be provided by the city
- The city could provide a model for other businesses by providing internships and mentoring programs

Volunteerism

In nearly every discussion group, the topic of volunteerism was discussed by our community participants. Recommendations from making volunteering easier, providing training to volunteers, connecting volunteers to children and schools that need support and mentoring programs for volunteers were all topics that were discussed. One participant summed up what we felt was a consensus by stating, "Whatever I can do, I will do it. But I'm not sure what I can do?"

The responses seem to indicate that we need to look at the overall system, the schools, the community, the students and the parents and how working together can help solve the issues our community is facing. One group cannot do it alone.

Next Steps

The city of Las Vegas will be utilizing the data provided by our community participants, our community survey data and other economic and social indicators to develop strategies for addressing those community challenges we feel the city could positively influence. The city will be reaching out to our community partners, including other governmental entities, the school district, Southern Nevada Health District and local non-profit agencies to identify appropriate collaborative opportunities for ensuring the continued success of the city of Las Vegas and its residents and all who call the Southern Nevada region home.